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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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USERS' GUIDE TO USDA ESTIMATES OF THE COST OF RAISING A CHILD

By Carolyn S. Edwards¹

Estimates of the cost of raising a child, developed in the Family Economics Research Group of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), have received a great deal of attention. These figures have been used not only as a budgetary aid for individual families as originally intended, but have been applied in legal, social welfare, educational, and research situations as well. The estimates have been used, for example, to provide guidelines for judges, attorneys, and expert witnesses in setting support payments for children in divorce cases (25) and in estimating damages arising from personal injury, wrongful death, and malpractice claims. They have been applied by State, county, and municipal social welfare agencies in setting public support levels for families and children, and by educators, financial advisers, and other professionals who work with families or who train those who will. Researchers have used the estimates in analyses on particular family situations, fertility behavior, and other demographic and population topics (23, 24, 26, 28, 29). The estimates have also been quoted widely in newspapers and popular publications.

This interest and diversity of uses, however, has generated numerous questions and some confusion with regard to what estimates are available and how they may be used. This article describes what estimates are available, provides the most widely requested estimates updated to current price levels, answers the most frequently asked questions about their use and interpretation, and describes information on additional materials of interest to users of the estimates.

AVAILABLE ESTIMATES

The cost estimates of raising a child were developed as a result of two separate but

related research efforts. In both, total and annual costs from birth to age 18 were determined for eight items in the budget: Food at home, food away from home, housing, transportation, medical care, education, clothing, and all other items. The estimates do not include costs for the birth of the child or for higher education.

The first of the studies (3, 4, 5, 6) was based on data from the 1960-61 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), a cooperative project of the USDA and the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Estimates reflected average expenditure patterns of families with husband and wife present and with no more than five children. Costs were developed separately for families living in the North Central, Northeast, South, and West and for those living in urban, rural farm, and rural nonfarm settings. The estimates were developed at three cost levels—economy, low, and moderate. Table 1 shows cost estimates for raising *urban* children in each of the four regions, updated to 1978 price levels.²

The second study (1), based on data from the 1973 Farm Family Living Expenditure Survey (FFLES) and on procedures modified from the first study, provides new estimates of the cost of raising *farm* children. Unlike the earlier estimates, these are not limited to families of a particular type or size, nor are they specific to regions. The estimates provide costs by sex as well as age of the child at four cost levels—thrifty (similar to the economy level), low, moderate, and liberal. These estimates, updated to 1977 price levels, were printed in the Winter 1979 issue of FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW.

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² Estimates from this study for rural nonfarm children, updated to 1978 price levels, are available from the Family Economics Research Group (see page 2 of this issue for address).

USE AND INTERPRETATION³

The estimates are expressed in terms of average costs for a child at a given age. They are based on families with children at those ages and take into account the needs, expenditure patterns, and family characteristics related to the age of the child. Estimates for children in specific circumstances, for example, children in foster care and in single-parent families, are not available; neither are estimates specific to birth order or spacing of children. A part of the first study that focused on the costs of raising children in families of different sizes indicated that the cost differences between 2- and 3-child families ranged from 7 to 12 percent (5). Cost differences between 3- and 4-child families also ranged from 7 to 12 percent. Costs per child decreased only 4 or 5 percent between 4- and 5-child families. A complete set of estimates specific to family size, however, has not been developed.

Most of the data on expenditures were reported in terms of the family unit in which the child lived. These expenditures had to be allocated to reflect each family member's share. To the extent possible, the allocation methods took into account both the portion of family expenditures which is related to family size and accompanying economies of scale and the portion which is attributable to individual family members based on their age and sex. For example, although per person housing and transportation costs do not increase directly in proportion to family size, these costs are more influenced by family size than by the age and sex of the family member. Per person food and clothing costs, on the other hand, are more nearly related to physiological and social needs that are tied to age and sex. Although there are some economies of scale in feeding larger families, there is not much savings associated with an increase in family size.

The estimates place emphasis on direct costs, or out-of-pocket expenditures, and therefore,

³ The information in this section is general and applicable to the estimates from both studies. Users should realize, however, that although a similar overall approach was applied to both data bases (2), changes in data collection, variable definition, and estimation procedures were inevitable and, in some cases, desirable. The estimates from the two studies are therefore not directly comparable. Users needing more specific detail should refer to the original papers (1, 4), available from the Family Economics Research Group.

do not represent the total consumption costs involved in raising a child. For example, they generally do not reflect family consumption that might be attributed to stocks of durables, past expenditures, income-in-kind, gifts, or the value of community services. Similarly, no account is made for the value of personal services performed by family members or earnings given up while raising children.

The CES and the FFLES provide cross-section data that present a detailed picture of the spending patterns of the population at one point in time—the early sixties for the urban and rural nonfarm estimates, and the early seventies for the farm estimates. The cost figures from birth to age 18 as presented in table 1, therefore, do not reflect the change in level and mix of goods and services available to or consumed by one household as a result of changes in prices, income, or preferences experienced as the child grows up. Instead, the estimates represent the experience and behavior of different families with children at various ages and expenditure patterns prevalent at the time the data were collected.

Cost Levels

The levels of the estimates are based on spending patterns associated with food consumption at the levels of the USDA food plans (7, 9). The families whose expenditures formed the basis of the estimates reported food expenditures equal to the food plan costs. Estimates for clothing at the low cost level, for example, were based on clothing expenditures of families whose food expenditures corresponded to the low cost food plan for families of their size and composition.

This use of the food plans as a benchmark for the cost levels of the estimates assumes that families who are spending at similar cost levels on food, allowing for differences in family size and composition, are living at similar levels. These levels are, in turn, reflected in other areas of consumption. An advantage of this approach is that food is the one category of consumption for which standards of adequacy are available. Use of the food plans also allows differences in family size and composition to be taken into consideration, which is not possible with income, the more common indicator of level of living.

Users of the estimates often ask which cost level they should use and how these levels relate to family income. Table 2 may be used to help select the appropriate cost level (8). This table is designed for use in conjunction with the food plans, however, and provides only general guidance for selecting child rearing cost estimates. The relationships indicated in the table were developed on a different data base, using different methods than the estimates of the cost of raising a child.

Region and Urbanization

The estimates developed in the first study were specific to region and to urbanization. The four regions were those used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and include these States:

<u>North Central</u>	<u>Northeast</u>
Illinois	Connecticut
Indiana	Delaware
Iowa	Maine
Kansas	Massachusetts
Michigan	New Hampshire
Minnesota	New Jersey
Missouri	New York
Nebraska	Pennsylvania
North Dakota	Rhode Island
Ohio	Vermont
South Dakota	
Wisconsin	
<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
Alabama	Arizona
Arkansas	California
Florida	Colorado
Georgia	Idaho
Kentucky	Montana
Louisiana	Nevada
Maryland	New Mexico
Mississippi	Oregon
North Carolina	Utah
Oklahoma	Washington
South Carolina	Wyoming
Tennessee	
Texas	
Virginia	
West Virginia	

Alaska and Hawaii were not represented. The District of Columbia was included in the South. Estimates for a U.S. average were not developed in the first study. If such an indicator is necessary, use of the estimates for the North Central region is most appropriate.

The definition of urbanization used in the CES data and reflected in the estimates from the first study included urban, rural nonfarm, and rural farm. Urban included incorporated places of a population of 2,500 or more or the

densely settled areas immediately adjacent to cities of a population of 50,000 or more. Rural nonfarm included those areas outside urban areas but not classified as farm. To be a rural farm, a 10-acre parcel needed sales of at least \$50 per year; a parcel of less than 10 acres needed sales of at least \$250. This definition of farm was also used in the FFLES data base.

Price Level Adjustments

Users may wish to make adjustments to the price levels so that the estimates will suit their particular needs. The estimates may be updated or backdated using appropriate subindexes of the Consumer Price Index provided in table 3. Each budget category must be adjusted individually to reflect differential price-level changes between budget items over time.

Before adjusting the price levels, users should determine whether constant or current dollar figures are more suitable to their needs. The estimates in table 1 are expressed in constant 1978 dollars and assume that the child progresses through 18 years at 1978 price levels. Constant dollar estimates are appropriate when interest is with the present costs of raising children of different ages. They are not appropriate for determining the total cost of raising one child; they are too high for the child who reaches age 18 in 1978, and too low for the child born in 1978.

When concern is with past or future costs of raising an individual child or a cohort of children of a particular age, however, current dollar estimates that reflect prices actually incurred should be used. Current dollar estimates may be calculated by applying price indexes for the different budget items for the calendar year corresponding to the child's age (table 3) to the cost estimates for that age (table 1). For example, the current dollar estimates to raise a child born in 1960 in the urban South at the moderate cost level would be \$37,061 (table 4) compared with the constant 1978 dollar estimates of \$60,298 (table 1). This current dollar estimate was calculated by applying the 1960 indexes to the estimated costs of the infancy year, the 1961 indexes to the age 1 estimates, and so on for the remaining years and adding to arrive at the total. Such a figure could be calculated to estimate past costs incurred raising a particular child born in 1960. If concern were with projecting costs

over the life of a child, as in anticipating support costs to be incurred for a particular child, users would want to consider projections for future price changes. For example, for a child born in 1976, the 1978 annual cost estimates for the infancy year could be backdated by use of the 1976 indexes, the annual figures for age 1 could be adjusted by use of the 1977 indexes, the figures for age 2 could be taken as is for 1978, and cost estimates for subsequent ages could be inflated sequentially by use of some projected price change assumptions for future years. A total could then be reached that would reflect the experienced and expected price changes over the life of the child as well as the cost changes associated with growth of the child.

Consideration also could be made for changes in family level of living over the life cycle by combining figures at different cost levels. For example, it might be assumed that a child was raised for several years at one cost level and for other years at another.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO THE COST OF RAISING A CHILD

Users of the child rearing cost estimates often inquire about additional materials to aid in the use and interpretation of the figures. The following materials provide supplementary detail on particular items in the budget, or extend the use of the estimates to other topics.

USDA Budgets for Food and Clothing

The child rearing estimates are cost budgets. They do not provide information on the quantity or quality of items actually purchased or needed to attain a given cost level or standard of adequacy. The USDA budgets for food and clothing, however, provide this information at comparable cost levels.

The food budgets (plans) take into account current information on nutritional needs and food consumption patterns as well as the nutrient content and prices of food. The food plans specify the amounts of food in 11 food groups needed to provide nutritionally adequate diets to persons in 20 age-sex groups at four cost levels—thrifty, low, moderate, and liberal (7, 9). A plan for any family can be determined by adding amounts of foods suggested for persons of the sex and age of family members (8). The

costs of the plans for the U.S. average are released monthly and published quarterly in *FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW*. Costs specific to the four regions are published in the Summer issue of *FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW*.

Cost and quantity budgets for clothing were developed by the USDA in two studies based on the same data used for the cost of raising a child estimates. The 1960-61 CES data provided estimates of the annual costs of clothing purchases for 21 categories of individuals, based on age, sex, and marital and employment status, and by urbanization, region, and cost level (10, 11, 13). The 1973 FFLES data provided the basis for annual cost estimates for farm children and adults for six clothing categories (15, 16). Estimates for farm children were published in the Winter 1979 issue of *FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW*; estimates for adults are on page 17 of this issue. Clothing quantity budgets (12) and an Interactive Computer Program for Wardrobe Replacement Planning (14) were also developed using the 1960-61 CES.

Higher Education

Costs for higher education are not included in the child rearing cost estimates. Estimates of the costs of tuition, fees, and room and board rates for institutions of higher education are available from the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (17). Estimates for the 1978-79 academic year indicate that such costs, per academic year, range from about \$1,800 to \$2,350 for public institutions and from about \$3,470 to \$5,610 for private, depending on the type of institution—2-year, 4-year, or university. Detail is also available on costs by type of charge, control and type of institution, and by residence status of the student. Another annual publication from the same agency provides estimated cost figures for the 1963-64 through 1976-77 academic years and projections of estimated charges at three cost levels for the 1977-78 through 1986-87 academic years in constant 1976-77 dollars (18).

Cost of Having a Baby

The child rearing cost estimates also do not include the costs involved in having a baby. A

recent release from the Health Insurance Institute (27) estimates this cost to be about \$2,170 to \$2,220. This estimate includes \$888 for hospital care, \$518-568 for medical care, and \$762 for the layette. (This last figure includes \$397 for nursery furnishings, identified as optional.) Costs for maternity clothes and unusual expenses such as drugs were not included. Data sources for the report were surveys conducted by the Health Insurance Association of America, MEDICAL ECONOMICS, the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Health Insurance Institute, and materials from a children's clothing manufacturer.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Family Budgets

Standard budgets are also published by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. These budgets cover all the outlays

made by a family (20, 22). They are designed to represent the costs of hypothetical lists of goods and services specified to portray three relative levels of living—lower, intermediate, and higher. The budget costs are periodically priced for 39 urban areas (19).

The USDA estimates differ from the BLS budgets in that the USDA estimates focus on specific expenditure categories. They reflect the spending patterns of actual families at specified cost levels, rather than a specified list of goods and services as in the BLS budgets. In addition, the USDA estimates focus on individuals of different age and sex living in urban, rural farm, and rural nonfarm families. The BLS budgets represent a precisely specified urban family of four: A husband age 38, his unemployed wife, a girl age 8, and a boy age 13. An equivalence scale may be used with the BLS budgets to estimate the costs for families of other sizes and composition (21).

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Table 1. Annual cost of raising an urban child from birth to age 18, by age, at 3 cost levels:
1978 price levels¹

NORTH CENTRAL

Age of child (years)	Total	Food at home ²	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing ³	Medical care	Educa- tion	Transpor- tation	All other ⁴
<u>Dollars</u>									
ECONOMY									
Under 1 -----	1,485	295	0	55	596	91	0	297	151
1 -----	1,541	351	0	55	596	91	0	297	151
2-3 -----	1,403	351	0	69	511	91	0	247	134
4-5 -----	1,475	387	36	69	511	91	0	247	134
6 -----	1,548	387	36	123	494	91	35	231	151
7-9 -----	1,622	461	36	123	494	91	35	231	151
10-11 -----	1,715	554	36	123	494	91	35	231	151
12 -----	1,770	554	36	178	494	91	35	231	151
13-15 -----	1,825	609	36	178	494	91	35	231	151
16-17 -----	1,963	683	36	192	528	91	35	247	151
Total -----	29,797	8,747	504	2,220	9,232	1,638	420	4,386	2,650
LOW									
Under 1 -----	2,017	369	0	82	835	127	0	369	235
1 -----	2,091	443	0	82	835	127	0	369	235
2-3 -----	1,936	424	0	123	716	109	0	346	218
4-5 -----	2,047	480	55	123	716	109	0	346	218
6 -----	2,084	480	55	192	648	109	35	330	235
7-9 -----	2,176	572	55	192	648	109	35	330	235
10-11 -----	2,287	683	55	192	648	109	35	330	235
12 -----	2,405	683	55	260	665	109	35	346	252
13-15 -----	2,478	756	55	260	665	109	35	346	252
16-17 -----	2,733	849	55	356	682	109	35	379	268
Total -----	40,619	10,831	770	3,560	12,446	1,998	420	6,298	4,296
MODERATE									
Under 1 -----	2,668	406	0	110	1,125	164	0	511	352
1 -----	2,760	498	0	110	1,125	164	0	511	352
2-3 -----	2,592	498	0	178	988	164	0	445	319
4-5 -----	2,757	572	91	178	988	164	0	445	319
6 -----	2,877	554	91	247	937	164	70	445	369
7-9 -----	3,006	683	91	247	937	164	70	445	369
10-11 -----	3,135	812	91	247	937	164	70	445	369
12 -----	3,364	830	109	356	971	164	70	478	386
13-15 -----	3,457	923	109	356	971	164	70	478	386
16-17 -----	3,823	1,033	109	494	1,005	164	70	528	420
Total -----	55,672	12,936	1,382	4,826	17,718	2,952	840	8,440	6,578

¹Child in a family of husband and wife and no more than 5 children.

²Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

³Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

⁴Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

Source: Costs were updated from estimates in table 2 of CFE (Adm.)-318, 1971, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Cost of Raising a Child--Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, detail tables. Indexes used are shown in table 3. Estimates rounded to nearest \$1.

Table 1. Annual cost of raising an urban child from birth to age 18, by age, at 3 cost levels:
1978 price levels¹

NORTHEAST

Age of child (years)	Total	Food at home ²	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing ³	Medical care	Educa- tion	Transpor- tation	All other ⁴
<u>Dollars</u>									
ECONOMY									
Under 1 -----	1,252	314	0	55	511	73	0	165	134
1 -----	1,307	369	0	55	511	73	0	165	134
2-3 -----	1,280	369	0	96	460	73	0	148	134
4-5 -----	1,353	406	36	96	460	73	0	148	134
6 -----	1,378	406	36	137	443	73	17	132	134
7-9 -----	1,452	480	36	137	443	73	17	132	134
10-11 -----	1,544	572	36	137	443	73	17	132	134
12 -----	1,593	590	36	151	460	73	17	132	134
13-15 -----	1,649	646	36	151	460	73	17	132	134
16-17 -----	1,811	720	36	206	477	73	17	148	134
Total -----	26,809	9,191	504	2,332	8,314	1,314	204	2,538	2,412
LOW									
Under 1 -----	1,692	387	0	82	716	109	0	247	151
1 -----	1,766	461	0	82	716	109	0	247	151
2-3 -----	1,670	461	0	123	613	91	0	231	151
4-5 -----	1,762	517	36	123	613	91	0	231	151
6 -----	1,783	517	36	178	562	91	17	214	168
7-9 -----	1,875	609	36	178	562	91	17	214	168
10-11 -----	1,986	720	36	178	562	91	17	214	168
12 -----	2,126	738	36	233	579	91	17	247	185
13-15 -----	2,181	793	36	233	579	91	17	247	185
16-17 -----	2,352	904	36	260	579	91	17	264	201
Total -----	35,075	11,513	504	3,176	10,730	1,674	204	4,218	3,056
MODERATE									
Under 1 -----	2,660	480	0	110	1,142	164	0	445	319
1 -----	2,770	590	0	110	1,142	164	0	445	319
2-3 -----	2,715	572	0	192	1,039	164	0	412	336
4-5 -----	2,880	646	91	192	1,039	164	0	412	336
6 -----	3,086	646	109	260	1,022	164	87	412	386
7-9 -----	3,215	775	109	260	1,022	164	87	412	386
10-11 -----	3,381	941	109	260	1,022	164	87	412	386
12 -----	3,606	941	109	384	1,056	164	87	462	403
13-15 -----	3,717	1,052	109	384	1,056	164	87	462	403
16-17 -----	4,009	1,162	127	480	1,074	164	87	495	420
Total -----	58,888	14,780	1,526	5,044	18,944	2,952	1,044	7,848	6,750

¹Child in a family of husband and wife and no more than 5 children.

²Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

³Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

⁴Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

Source: Costs were updated from estimates in table 2 of CFE (Adm.)-318, 1971, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Cost of Raising a Child--Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, detail tables. Indexes used are shown in table 3. Estimates rounded to nearest \$1.

Table 1. Annual cost of raising an urban child from birth to age 18, by age, at 3 cost levels:
1978 price levels¹

SOUTH

Age of child (years)	Total	Food at home ²	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing ³	Medical care	Educa- tion	Transpor- tation	All other ⁴
<u>Dollars</u>									
ECONOMY									
Under 1 -----	1,412	277	0	69	545	73	0	297	151
1 -----	1,467	332	0	69	545	73	0	297	151
2-3 -----	1,328	332	0	82	460	73	0	247	134
4-5 -----	1,401	369	36	82	460	73	0	247	134
6 -----	1,439	369	18	137	443	73	17	231	151
7-9 -----	1,513	443	18	137	443	73	17	231	151
10-11 -----	1,587	517	18	137	443	73	17	231	151
12 -----	1,693	517	36	192	460	73	17	247	151
13-15 -----	1,730	554	36	192	460	73	17	247	151
16-17 -----	1,822	646	36	192	460	73	17	247	151
Total -----	28,016	8,214	396	2,440	8,348	1,314	204	4,450	2,650
LOW									
Under 1 -----	1,973	351	0	96	801	127	0	363	235
1 -----	2,046	424	0	96	801	127	0	363	235
2-3 -----	1,848	406	0	137	682	109	0	313	201
4-5 -----	1,939	461	36	137	682	109	0	313	201
6 -----	1,944	461	36	192	596	109	35	297	218
7-9 -----	2,018	535	36	192	596	109	35	297	218
10-11 -----	2,110	627	36	192	596	109	35	297	218
12 -----	2,264	627	55	260	613	109	35	330	235
13-15 -----	2,338	701	55	260	613	109	35	330	235
16-17 -----	2,522	793	55	302	630	109	35	346	252
Total -----	38,133	10,145	618	3,536	11,618	1,998	420	5,772	4,026
MODERATE									
Under 1 -----	2,905	443	0	123	1,210	182	0	544	403
1 -----	2,997	535	0	123	1,210	182	0	544	403
2-3 -----	2,829	517	0	192	1,074	182	0	478	386
4-5 -----	2,975	572	91	192	1,074	182	0	478	386
6 -----	3,148	572	109	260	1,022	182	105	478	420
7-9 -----	3,259	683	109	260	1,022	182	105	478	420
10-11 -----	3,406	830	109	260	1,022	182	105	478	420
12 -----	3,648	830	127	384	1,056	182	105	511	453
13-15 -----	3,759	941	127	384	1,056	182	105	511	453
16-17 -----	4,063	1,033	127	494	1,091	182	105	561	470
Total -----	60,298	13,156	1,598	5,098	19,254	3,276	1,260	9,034	7,622

¹Child in a family of husband and wife and no more than 5 children.

²Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

³Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

⁴Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

Source: Costs were updated from estimates in table 2 of CFE (Adm.)-318, 1971, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Cost of Raising a Child--Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, detail tables. Indexes used are shown in table 3. Estimates rounded to nearest \$1.

Table 1. Annual cost of raising an urban child from birth to age 18, by age, at 3 cost levels:
1978 price levels¹

WEST

Age of child (years)	Total	Food at home ²	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing ³	Medical care	Educa- tion	Transpor- tation	All other ⁴
<u>Dollars</u>									
ECONOMY									
Under 1 -----	1,487	295	0	55	579	127	0	280	151
1 -----	1,561	369	0	55	579	127	0	280	151
2-3 -----	1,434	351	0	82	511	109	0	247	134
4-5 -----	1,525	406	36	82	511	109	0	247	134
6 -----	1,567	406	36	123	494	109	17	231	151
7-9 -----	1,659	498	36	123	494	109	17	231	151
10-11 -----	1,733	572	36	123	494	109	17	231	151
12 -----	1,837	590	36	192	511	109	17	231	151
13-15 -----	1,893	646	36	192	511	109	17	231	151
16-17 -----	2,019	738	36	192	511	127	17	247	151
Total -----	30,530	9,226	504	2,328	9,232	2,034	204	4,352	2,650
LOW									
Under 1 -----	2,045	369	0	82	818	145	0	396	235
1 -----	2,137	461	0	82	818	145	0	396	235
2-3 -----	2,008	443	0	123	716	145	0	346	235
4-5 -----	2,118	498	55	123	716	145	0	346	235
6 -----	2,170	498	55	192	665	145	17	346	252
7-9 -----	2,262	590	55	192	665	145	17	346	252
10-11 -----	2,373	701	55	192	665	145	17	346	252
12 -----	2,528	720	73	260	682	145	17	363	268
13-15 -----	2,583	775	73	260	682	145	17	363	268
16-17 -----	2,795	886	91	260	699	145	17	412	285
Total -----	42,003	11,199	914	3,368	12,616	2,610	204	6,528	4,564
MODERATE									
Under 1 -----	2,859	443	0	110	1,176	200	0	544	386
1 -----	2,970	554	0	110	1,176	200	0	544	386
2-3 -----	2,833	535	0	178	1,056	200	0	478	386
4-5 -----	3,016	609	109	178	1,056	200	0	478	386
6 -----	3,234	590	127	260	1,039	200	87	495	436
7-9 -----	3,364	720	127	260	1,039	200	87	495	436
10-11 -----	3,530	886	127	260	1,039	200	87	495	436
12 -----	3,741	886	127	370	1,074	200	87	544	453
13-15 -----	3,833	978	127	370	1,074	200	87	544	453
16-17 -----	4,228	1,107	146	466	1,125	200	87	594	503
Total -----	61,609	13,841	1,780	4,904	19,356	3,600	1,044	9,334	7,750

¹Child in a family of husband and wife and no more than 5 children.

²Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

³Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

⁴Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

Source: Costs were updated from estimates in table 2 of CFE (Adm.)-318, 1971, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Cost of Raising a Child--Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, detail tables. Indexes used are shown in table 3. Estimates rounded to nearest \$1.

Table 2. Food plans by size and income of family, spring 1978

Income (before taxes)	1-person families	2-person families	3-person families	4-person families	5-person families	6-person families
\$2,500 to \$5,000	Thrifty ¹ or Low-cost	Thrifty ¹ or Low-cost	Thrifty ¹	Thrifty ¹	Thrifty ¹	Thrifty ¹
\$5,000 to \$10,000	Moderate-cost	Low-cost or Moderate-cost	Thrifty ¹ or Low-cost	Thrifty ¹	Thrifty ¹	Thrifty ¹
\$10,000 to \$15,000	Liberal	Moderate-cost	Low-cost or Moderate-cost	Low-cost	Thrifty ¹ or Low-cost	Thrifty ¹
\$15,000 to \$20,000	Liberal	Liberal	Moderate-cost	Low-cost or Moderate-cost	Low-cost	Thrifty ¹ or Low-cost
\$20,000 to \$30,000	Liberal	Liberal	Moderate-cost or Liberal	Moderate-cost	Low-cost or Moderate-cost	Low-cost
\$30,000 to \$40,000	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Moderate-cost or Liberal	Moderate-cost or Liberal	Moderate-cost
\$40,000 or more	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Liberal	Moderate-cost or Liberal

¹Many families of this size and income are eligible for assistance through the Food Stamp Program.

Source: USDA, Science and Education Administration, 1979, Family Food Budgeting--For Good Meals and Good Nutrition, HG 94 (8).

Note: The economy level of the child rearing cost estimates (table 1) would be used wherever the thrifty plan is indicated above.

Table 3. Annual average Consumer Price Index data for updating and backdating estimates of the cost of raising children (1967=100)

Budget category	Food at home	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing	Medical care	Education	Transportation	All other
CPI group ¹	Food at home	Food away from home	Apparel and upkeep	Housing	Medical care	Reading and recreation ²	Transportation	Personal care and Reading and recreation (average) ²
1979 (March)	230.1	238.1	165.2	217.5	233.4	208.3	200.7	199.9
1978	209.9	218.3	159.5	202.6	219.4	198.2	185.8	190.1
1977	190.2	200.3	154.2	189.6	202.4	157.9	177.2	164.4
1976	179.5	186.1	147.6	177.2	184.7	151.2	165.5	155.8
1975	175.8	174.3	142.3	166.8	168.6	144.4	150.6	147.6
1974	162.4	159.4	136.2	150.6	150.5	133.8	137.7	135.6
1973	141.4	141.4	126.8	135.0	137.7	125.9	123.8	125.6
1972	121.6	131.1	122.3	129.2	132.5	122.8	119.9	121.3
1971	116.4	126.1	119.8	124.3	128.4	119.3	118.6	118.1
1970	113.7	119.9	116.1	118.9	120.6	113.4	112.7	113.3
1969	108.2	111.6	111.5	110.8	113.4	108.7	107.2	109.0
1968	103.2	105.2	105.4	104.2	106.1	104.7	103.2	104.5
1967	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1966	100.3	95.1	96.1	97.2	93.4	97.5	97.2	97.3
1965	95.5	90.9	93.7	94.9	89.5	95.9	95.9	95.6
1964	93.2	88.9	92.7	93.8	87.3	95.0	94.3	94.8
1963	92.2	87.3	91.9	92.7	85.6	92.8	93.0	93.1
1962	91.0	85.4	90.9	91.7	83.5	91.3	92.5	91.8
1961	90.4	83.2	90.4	90.9	81.4	89.3	90.6	90.0
1960	89.6	81.4	89.6	90.2	79.1	87.3	89.6	88.7
1959	88.8	79.3	88.2	88.6	76.4	85.3	89.6	87.0
1958	91.0	77.2	87.5	87.7	73.2	83.9	86.0	85.4
1957	87.2	74.9	87.3	86.2	69.9	80.7	83.3	82.4
1956	84.4	72.2	85.8	83.6	67.2	77.8	78.8	79.5
1955	84.1	70.8	84.1	82.3	64.8	76.7	77.4	77.3
1954	85.8	70.1	84.5	81.7	63.4	76.9	78.3	76.8
1953	86.2	68.9	84.6	80.8	61.4	77.7	79.5	77.0

¹The Revised Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W) replaced the unrevised CPI; use revised as shown for adjusting estimates to 1978 and on; unrevised CPI for adjusting to 1953-1977; monthly indexes are seasonally adjusted.

²In using the revised CPI-W to adjust estimates of the cost of raising a child (table 1), the "Personal and educational expenses" index should replace the "Reading and recreation" index; the average of the "Personal care" and the "Personal and educational expenses" indexes should replace the average of the "Personal care" and the "Reading and recreation" indexes.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Note: To adjust the price levels of the estimates of the cost of raising a child to specific year price levels, multiply the 1978 estimate for each budget category by the index number for that category for the desired year and divide the product by the corresponding index number for 1978. For example, in order to update 1978 costs for housing to March 1979 prices, multiply the 1978 estimate for housing by 217.5 and divide by 202.6. In order to backdate 1978 costs for housing to 1968 prices, multiply the 1978 estimate for housing by 104.2 and divide by 202.6.

Table 4. Cost of raising a child born in 1960 in the urban South at the moderate cost level; prices are current for each year specified

Year	Age of child	Total	Food at home	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing	Medical care	Education	Transportation	All other
<u>Dollars</u>										
1960	Under 1	1,313	189	0	69	539	66	0	262	188
1961	1	1,368	231	0	70	543	68	0	265	191
1962	2	1,313	224	0	110	486	69	0	238	186
1963	3	1,328	227	0	111	491	71	0	239	189
1964	4	1,407	254	37	112	497	72	0	243	192
1965	5	1,429	260	38	113	503	74	0	247	194
1966	6	1,563	273	48	157	491	77	52	250	215
1967	7	1,658	325	50	164	505	83	53	257	221
1968	8	1,727	336	53	172	526	88	55	266	231
1969	9	1,818	352	56	182	559	94	58	276	241
1970	10	2,000	450	60	190	600	100	60	290	250
1971	11	2,082	461	63	196	627	106	63	305	261
1972	12	2,321	481	77	295	674	110	65	330	289
1973	13	2,548	634	83	306	704	114	67	341	299
1974	14	2,832	728	93	328	785	125	71	379	323
1975	15	3,086	789	102	343	870	140	76	414	352
1976	16	3,522	884	109	458	954	153	80	499	385
1977	17	3,746	937	117	478	1,021	168	84	535	406
Total										
1960-77 ...		37,061	8,035	986	3,854	11,375	1,778	784	5,636	4,613

Source: Costs were updated from estimates in table 2 of CFE (Adm.)-318, 1971, USDA, Agricultural Research Service, Cost of Raising a Child--Derived from 1960-61 Survey of Consumer Expenditures, detail tables. Indexes used are shown in table 3. Estimates rounded to nearest \$1.

CLOTHING BUDGETS FOR FARM ADULTS, 1978

By Annette Polyzou, Carolyn S. Edwards, and Mills B. Weinstein¹

Annual clothing budget costs for farm adults were developed based on data from the 1973 Farm Family Living Expenditure Survey (FFLES). The budgets include costs for unmarried and married men and women in several age categories for four cost levels—thrifty, low, moderate, and liberal.²

Total clothing costs for unmarried men, at 1978 price levels, range from \$67 to \$81 at the thrifty level, \$77 to \$116 at the low level, \$93 to \$181 at the moderate level, and \$109 to \$262 at the liberal level, depending on age (see table). Clothing costs for married men range from \$43 to \$110 at the thrifty level, \$54 to \$182 at the low level, \$104 to \$274 at the moderate level, and \$148 to \$406 at the liberal level. Total clothing costs for unmarried women range from \$34 to \$68 at the thrifty level, \$44 to \$148 at the low level, \$73 to \$321 at the moderate level, and \$95 to \$459 at the liberal level. Clothing costs for married women range from \$21 to \$54 at the thrifty level, \$33 to \$158 at the low level, \$91 to \$304 at the moderate level, and \$146 to \$669 at the liberal level.

Clothing costs were generally highest in the youngest age groups for both unmarried and married men and women. Individuals in these

age groups may lead a more active social life and may be more fashion conscious than individuals in older age groups, thus requiring a larger and more diverse wardrobe. Clothing costs were generally lowest in the 65 and over age group for unmarried and married men and women. Individuals in this age group may have less income to spend on clothing and less clothing needs due to retirement from the labor force. These individuals may also have purchased more conservative and durable clothing that necessitated less frequent replacement.

Separate estimates were computed for six categories of clothing: Wraps, outerwear, underwear and nightwear, hosiery, footwear, and hats and all other items. The wraps category includes light and heavy coats and jackets. Outerwear includes suits, sweaters, pants, shirts, dresses, skirts, and sportswear. Underwear and nightwear includes underpants, undershirts, bras, slips, sleepwear, and robes. The hats and all other category includes hats, gloves, handbags, jewelry, and accessories. Outerwear costs generally accounted for the greatest proportion of the total annual costs, followed by footwear.

The budget costs cover purchased clothing only. The actual inventories probably included additional garments received as gifts, sewn at home, or obtained from some other source without cost. This may account for the low clothing costs in some categories.

Cost differences between the four levels may reflect differences in the price and number of garments purchased by individuals as well as the frequency of replacement. For example, individuals spending at the liberal level may purchase more expensive items of apparel, may have a greater number of garments, and may replace items more frequently than individuals spending at the thrifty, low, or moderate levels.

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² For information on the sample, levels of the budgets, age-sex and clothing categories, and methodology, see "Clothing Budgets for Farm Children, 1977," by A. Polyzou, C.S. Edwards, and M.B. Weinstein. Paper presented at the Food and Agricultural Outlook Conference in November 1978 at Washington, D.C. This paper may be ordered from the Family Economics Research Group. See address on page 2 of this issue.

Cost level, marital status, and age of adult (years)	Total		Wraps		Outerwear		Underwear and nightwear		Hosiery		Footwear		Hats and all other	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	Dollars													
Thrifty level:														
Unmarried														
18-24	81	68	7	4	30	16	6	12	3	11	24	17	11	8
25-64	67	50	9	4	26	18	9	8	2	5	16	13	5	2
65 and over	70	34	6	5	29	9	8	6	3	2	19	11	5	1
Married														
16-34	110	54	13	3	39	20	8	9	4	7	33	14	13	1
35-44	97	21	8	0	35	0	8	6	3	7	30	8	13	0
45-54	73	53	8	6	15	11	9	12	4	8	23	14	14	2
55-64	59	27	2	0	28	0	9	9	2	5	18	13	0	0
65 and over	43	22	6	5	11	0	4	3	1	4	15	10	6	0
Low level:														
Unmarried														
18-24	116	148	12	13	53	73	7	14	4	13	28	23	12	12
25-64	82	55	10	4	36	20	9	8	3	6	18	14	6	3
65 and over	77	44	7	6	32	13	9	7	3	3	20	12	6	3
Married														
16-34	182	158	17	13	85	71	10	18	6	15	46	27	18	14
35-44	175	108	17	11	84	35	11	17	5	12	40	23	18	10
45-54	146	80	16	10	66	25	11	14	5	9	32	18	16	4
55-64	70	33	4	2	34	0	9	10	3	5	20	16	0	0
65 and over	54	35	6	6	18	7	5	4	2	5	16	12	7	1
Moderate level:														
Unmarried														
18-24	181	321	22	33	95	196	9	18	5	18	36	36	14	20
25-64	135	73	16	6	67	27	10	11	5	9	27	17	10	3
65 and over	93	101	8	12	41	39	11	12	4	9	20	19	9	10
Married														
16-34	274	293	23	25	145	137	13	30	7	25	61	44	25	32
35-44	263	304	27	25	139	151	15	31	8	19	51	44	23	34
45-54	205	214	23	28	106	96	13	24	6	15	39	35	18	16
55-64	156	159	16	20	81	64	11	19	4	12	30	33	14	11
65 and over	104	91	9	12	55	36	7	10	3	7	21	22	9	4
Liberal level:														
Unmarried														
18-24	262	459	34	49	147	294	12	22	7	22	45	46	17	26
25-64	212	95	24	8	112	36	13	14	8	12	39	21	16	4
65 and over ...	109	141	10	16	49	57	13	16	5	13	21	24	11	15
Married														
16-34	406	457	32	41	228	217	17	45	10	36	84	64	35	54
35-44	374	669	39	51	209	368	20	58	11	32	65	82	30	78
45-54	332	344	37	45	195	166	17	33	7	21	55	51	21	28
55-64	230	242	25	32	118	108	13	24	5	16	37	44	32	18
65 and over ...	148	146	11	17	86	65	10	16	4	10	26	31	11	7

¹Budgets were derived from expenditure data from the 1973 Farm Family Living Expenditure Survey, conducted by the Statistical Reporting Service, USDA, now part of the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service. Estimates were based on data from families with members of the corresponding age-sex categories.

Thrifty, low, moderate, and liberal budget levels were computed at levels of living which corresponded to family food expenditure at the USDA food plan levels.

The budgets cover costs for garments and footwear, but exclude clothing materials for sewing and upkeep.

Annual costs of the clothing budgets were updated to 1978 by adjusting for price changes for clothing since the survey date.

The following 1978 annual average subindexes of the Consumer Price Index, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, were used: Men's and boys' apparel, women's and girls' apparel, and footwear.

Data rounded to nearest \$1.

FROZEN-PREPARED PLATE DINNERS AND ENTREES— COST VS. CONVENIENCE

By Pamela Isom¹

Consumers spent more than \$2 billion on frozen-prepared plate dinners (TV dinners) and entrees in 1977.² On the average this accounted for about 2 percent of each food dollar spent in grocery stores. Households that rely heavily on these foods may be using a greater part of their food dollar for them.

A study comparing costs of selected frozen plate dinners and entrees and their home-prepared counterparts was conducted in the Washington, D.C., area in the fall of 1978. This study shows that some commercial plate dinners and entrees may cost more than twice as much as similar home-prepared products (see table).

To compare the cost of home-prepared and commercially prepared plate dinners, the kinds and amounts of component foods in home-prepared meals were kept the same as in the commercial products. For frozen-prepared entrees, however, the ingredients were not necessarily present in the same proportion as in the home-prepared entrees. For instance, some of the frozen entrees contained less of some ingredients (meat, cheese, or vegetables) or more of others (noodles or sauce) than similar dishes prepared from recipes believed to be typical of those used in home preparation. The portion sizes of the entrees were kept identical by weight in comparing costs. The foods laboratory of the Consumer and Food Economics Institute developed the recipes for the home-prepared foods and obtained the weights of commercial products used in estimating the cost of equal portions.

What the Consumer Pays

The consumer usually pays for convenience. All the commercially frozen plate dinners were more expensive than the home-prepared ones. Using prices collected in the Washington, D.C., area in the fall of 1978, the cost of the dinners ranged from 13 percent to 105 percent more

than the cost of the comparable home-prepared product.

Frozen entrees were also more expensive than home-prepared with the exception of crabcakes and deviled crab which contained substantially less crabmeat than the home-prepared products. Certain of these convenience items, however, are better buys than others. Chicken pie, for instance, costs only 9 percent more than home-prepared when purchased in the convenience form, while commercially prepared lasagna costs 127 percent more. In several commercial entrees, the amount of meat, poultry, or fish appeared to be related to cost—the less meat, the lower the cost relative to the home-prepared item. For example, chicken pie, chicken chow mein, crabcakes, and deviled crab contained smaller amounts of poultry or fish than similar home-prepared products.

What the Consumer Gets

Frozen-prepared dinners and entrees undeniably offer many advantages. A major consideration is probably the reduced time and effort expended in active food preparation. Another is the elimination of some prepreparation chores—planning, buying, and storing ingredients, some of which may be used infrequently. Cleanup chores, such as dishwashing, are also substantially reduced. Frozen dinners and entrees may expand the variety of main dish items served in households with inexperienced cooks. In addition, these commercially prepared foods are often portioned in amounts appropriate for one or two persons, and their use in small households may reduce leftovers and decrease the chance of waste.

Frozen-prepared meals and entrees do have some drawbacks in addition to their cost. Consumers may prefer more meat, poultry, fish, cheese, or other ingredients than is provided by a serving of the convenience item. In addition, persons concerned with controlling certain substances in their diet—such as fat, sugar, salt—may have less control when using a commercial product because they usually cannot determine the presence and amounts of such substances in the product from the container label.

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² 31st Annual Consumer Expenditure Survey, *Supermarketing*, September 1978.

Cost of equal weight portions of home-prepared and commercially prepared plate dinners and entrees¹

Food item	Portion size	Amount of cooked meat, poultry, fish, or cheese provided by portion		Cost per portion		Cost relative to home-prepared	
		Home-prepared	Commercial	Home-prepared	Commercial	Home-prepared	Commercial
		Ounces	Ounces	Cents	Cents	Percent	Percent
Frozen plate dinners ² :							
Beef dinner	11.3	3.6	3.6	75	85	100	113
Meat loaf dinner	9.1	3 3.0	3 3.0	44	79	100	179
Fried chicken dinner ...	4 9.3	2.1	2.1	38	79	100	205
Turkey dinner	12.5	2.3	2.3	50	79	100	159
Haddock dinner	11.2	3.6	3.6	72	124	100	171
Frozen entrees:							
Lasagna	9.8	5.1	2.1	63	142	100	227
Patties, all beef	2.7	2.7	2.7	31	50	100	160
Chicken a la king	5.7	1.2	1.3	28	43	100	153
Chicken chow mein	6.6	2.1	.2	48	65	100	135
Fried chicken	4.7	2.0	2.0	28	51	100	185
Chicken pie	7.8	1.5	.9	35	38	100	109
Turkey tetrazzini	8.1	2.2	1.1	57	96	100	168
Tuna noodle casserole ..	7.8	1.3	.9	38	80	100	209
Crabcakes	2.8	2.4	1.3	115	47	100	41
Deviled crab	3.1	1.8	.7	84	50	100	59
Shrimp newburg	4.2	1.6	1.2	76	151	100	197
Cheese pizza	8.3	5 4.8	5 3.3	45	71	100	159

¹Prices collected in the Washington, D.C., area, fall 1978.

²All plate dinners included potatoes and a vegetable. With the exception of chicken, all had gravy or sauce; the turkey dinner also contained bread dressing.

³The weight of the meat loaf included nonmeat items, such as celery, onion, and breadcrumbs; the commercial dinner also contained soy protein.

⁴Weight is for the home-prepared dinner; weight for the commercial dinner is 10.1. Difference in weight is due to the higher ratio of coating to meat in the commercial product.

⁵Weight includes sauce and spices in addition to the cheese.

RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board has approved final regulations which will permit its member savings and loan associations to offer three new types of mortgages. Effective January 1979, federally chartered savings and loan associations were permitted to offer graduated payment mortgages, reverse annuity mortgages, and, in California only, variable rate mortgages. (See FAMILY ECONOMICS REVIEW, Fall 1978, for a discussion of these mortgage types.) The regulations require the lender to disclose specific information about the new mortgages to the borrower, and to offer the borrower a choice between the new mortgages and the standard, fixed-rate, level payment mortgage. The borrower must certify that the lender made the necessary disclosures before offering a choice of one of the new mortgages.

The Veterans' Housing Benefits Act of 1978, effective October 1, 1978, improves housing benefits programs of the Veterans' Administration. Provisions include increasing the maximum home loan guarantee from \$17,500 to \$25,000, expanding the loan program to purchases of condominiums and mobile homes, and encouraging energy-saving home improvements. The maximum grant for specially adapted housing for severely disabled veterans is increased from \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Sources: Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1978, Federal savings and loan system, Alternative mortgage instruments, *Federal Register*, 43 FR 245, 59336-340. Public Law 95-476, 92 Stat. 1497, Oct. 18, 1978, Veterans' Housing Benefits Act of 1978.

RECENT REPORTS ON HOUSING

Several reports issued recently examine issues and trends in the housing market.

The "Summary Report of Current Findings from the Experimental Housing Allowance Program" presents an overview of the housing allowance research program and a synopsis of findings to date. This research program, conducted under the direction of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, studies the demand, supply, and administrative issues related to the use of housing allowances. Housing allowances are direct cash assistance payments to lower-income households designed to enable them to obtain adequate housing of their own choice. The current major findings of the research focus on who participates in the allowance program and how they use their payments, the effects of the program on the location and quality of participants' housing, and the effects of the program on housing market factors such as price and new construction. The report also provides references for more comprehensive discussions of housing allowance issues and the research methods and findings of the program. Available free from: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 451 7th Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20410.

A U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) report, "Why Are New House Prices So High, How Are They Influenced by Government Regulations, and How Can Prices be Reduced," focuses on the cost of new, single family housing. The report notes that while the price of new housing has increased substantially in recent years, such housing is, nevertheless, being sold in record numbers. The GAO's analysis of this situation includes a review of the extent of the housing affordability problem, including an analysis of who is most affected, and how the nature of recent new home buyers and Government regulations have influenced new house prices. Government actions that already have been taken, those presently being considered, and other possible alternatives for reducing new house prices are discussed. Copies of the report are available free from: U.S. General Accounting Office, Room 4522, 441 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20548.

The "Final Report of the Task Force on Housing Costs" is the product of 52 housing specialists appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to represent the private sector, consumer interests, academic institutions, and all

levels of government. Created in August 1977, the task force was appointed for 9 months to study factors affecting the cost of housing, and make recommendations on actions that might be taken to reduce these costs. Three areas of inquiry were defined: Land supply and development; building and technology; and financing, money markets, and marketing. The report presents an overview of the study, the findings, and recommendations in each of the three areas, and a recommended nationwide housing cost reduction program. Single copies available free from: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Room B-258, 451 7th Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20410.

The Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 required that an annual report be made on the progress toward meeting the national housing goal of "a decent home and a suitable

living environment for every American family." The "Tenth Annual Report on the National Housing Goal" contains data and descriptions of housing developments in 1977 and those anticipated through 1978. Production and marketing, price and cost, and finance trends are covered. Size, quality, and price characteristics of the existing housing stock are also discussed. Appendices include information on housing assistance programs, public and private housing preservation efforts, levels and predictions for both financial and nonfinancial resources for housing, and a comparative review of European experiences in determining housing needs. A limited supply of the complete report is available free from: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Legislative Reference Office, Room 9253, 451 7th Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20410.

CONSTRUCTION STATISTICS

The "Construction Statistics Data Finder" is a 12-page publication that lists all the types of statistics published in the Construction Reports Series and in the Census of Construction. Twenty publications are listed and described, including table titles, geographic detail provided, frequency of publication, and the period

for which data are available. In addition, names and telephone numbers of the subject-matter specialists associated with each of the statistical series are provided. Single copies available free from: Data Finder, Construction Statistics Division, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20233.

NUTRIENT CONTENT OF THE NATIONAL FOOD SUPPLY

The caloric and nutrient content of the 1978 food supply is reported and compared with that of 1967 in "Nutrient Content of the National Food Supply"—an article by Ruth Marston and Louise Page appearing in the December 1978 issue of NATIONAL FOOD REVIEW.

The text, accompanied by tables, includes estimated levels for food energy (calories), pro-

tein, fat, carbohydrate, four minerals—calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, and seven vitamins—thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin A value, vitamin B₆, vitamin B₁₂, and ascorbic acid. Trends in the amount of fat in the diet and sources of dietary fat, with consequent changes in fatty acid and cholesterol content, are discussed.

COMMUTING TO WORK—A COST COMPARISON

"Rideshare and Save—A Cost Comparison," issued by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, compares the annual costs of commuting to work by driving alone in a subcompact or standard automobile with the annual costs of carpooling or vanpooling.

The estimates include total owning and operating costs for seven commuting situations and three commuting distances. The seven commuting situations are: (1) Driving alone, (2) a shared-driving carpool (each person shares using his or her car) for 2 persons, (3) a shared-driving carpool for 4 persons, (4) a shared-riding carpool (one person's car is used and everyone shares expenses) for 2 persons, (5) a shared-riding carpool for 4 persons, (6) a

vanpool for 8 persons, and (7) a vanpool for 12 persons.

According to the estimates, a shared-riding carpool for 4 persons is the least expensive when commuting short distances (10 miles one way). However, vanpooling for 12 persons becomes the most economical when the commuting distance is lengthened to 40 miles one way.

A worksheet and detailed instructions are provided to estimate individual costs of commuting.

A copy of this publication can be obtained free from the Federal Highway Administration, Public Affairs, 400 7th Street, SW., Washington, D.C. 20590.

TRAVELING TO WORK

Major Modes of Travel

Among all commuters using vehicles to travel to work in 1976, 80 percent used an automobile or truck as their major mode of transportation, 19 percent used public transportation, and 1 percent used other means.¹ Of those workers using the automobile or truck, more than three-fourths drove alone, while one-fourth traveled in carpools. Only 8 percent of all workers using vehicles commuted by truck, although the use of trucks was higher in the West and Southwest—18 percent of all workers using vehicles in Houston, Tex., and 17 percent in Oklahoma City, Okla.

The method chosen to travel to work is often determined by the size of the metropolitan area and the distance traveled—workers in more populated areas are more likely to use public transportation than workers in smaller areas. For example, in the New York area 48 percent of commuters used public transportation compared with only 1 percent in the Oklahoma City, Okla., and the Raleigh, N.C., areas. Larger metropolitan areas, of course, tend to have more extensive public transportation systems that may encourage greater use.

In general, workers show a trend toward using less public transportation. Between 1970 and 1976 the percentage of workers using public transportation declined from 24 to 19 percent. Workers who changed their mode of travel were more likely to go from a public to a private means of transportation than the reverse.

¹ Data taken from a survey of 20 SMSA's (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area).

Length and Duration of Trip

In 1976, the median distance from home to work for commuters was 7.6 miles and the median travel time to work was 21.8 minutes (table 1). Workers using the railroad had the longest median distance to travel and the longest median travel time. Work trips made by carpools were generally longer in both distance and time than those made by commuters who drove alone. Commuters living in the Houston, Tex., metro area traveled the greatest median distance to work on a typical commuting day—9.2 miles—compared with the Allentown,

Pa., area where commuters traveled the shortest median distance to work—4.8 miles. The longest median time for traveling to work was among workers living in the New York metro area—28.7 minutes—and the shortest travel time to work was in the Grand Rapids, Mich., area—15.7 minutes.

Source: Data from "Selected Characteristics of Travel to Work in 20 Metropolitan Areas: 1976," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-23, No. 72, 1978, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. This is one of a series of publications from the "Travel to Work Supplement" of the Annual Housing Survey.

Median distance and time to work by major mode of transportation: 1976

Mode of travel	Median distance	Median time taken
	Miles	Minutes
All workers not working at home	7.6	21.8
Workers using vehicles	8.2	22.4
Auto	8.1	20.2
Truck	9.3	20.6
Auto or truck ¹	8.2	20.2
Drives alone	7.9	19.6
Carpool	9.5	22.7
Shares driving	13.2	26.7
Drives others	9.5	23.6
Rides with someone	6.8	19.1
Public transportation ²	8.8	39.5
Bus or streetcar	5.0	31.1
Subway or elevated	10.2	43.4
Railroad	36.0	68.2
Other means ³	3.5	15.5
Walks only	0.6	9.2
Not reported	6.6	19.7

¹Includes a small number of workers using an auto or truck but not specifying type of riding arrangement.

²Includes workers using taxicabs.

³Bicycle, motorcycle, and all other means not listed.

Source: Data from "Selected Characteristics of Travel to Work in 20 Metropolitan Areas: 1976," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-23, No. 72, 1978, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

WORKING WOMEN, JUNE 1978

Half of all women 16 years and over (almost 42 million women) were working or looking for work in June 1978. They made up about 42 percent of all U.S. workers, compared with 35 percent in 1965. As in the past, most women in the labor force were employed in or seeking full-time employment. Almost three out of every four employed women held full-time jobs (35 hours or more per week), and three out of every four unemployed women were looking for full-time jobs.

In 1978, women accounted for 79 percent of all clerical workers and 59 percent of all service workers (other than household workers)—traditional fields in the past for women. However, women are increasingly employed in

occupations associated with higher status and earnings. For example, about one-tenth of all lawyers, judges, doctors, and industrial engineers are women.

A high of 8.2 million families were headed by women who had either never married or were separated, widowed, or divorced in June 1978. The labor force participation rate of these women rose to 59 percent in 1978, compared with an average of 55 percent throughout most of the 1970's.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978, Employment in perspective: Working women, Rpt. 544, No. 2, 2nd quarter.

UNIFORM TIRE QUALITY GRADING SYSTEM

The Uniform Tire Quality Grading regulation, issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, is intended to aid the consumer in making an informed choice in the purchase of passenger car tires. The regulation requires that all passenger car bias-ply, bias-belted, and radial tires be graded to indicate treadwear, traction, and temperature resistance based on the relative performance of the tires in specific Federal Government tests.

Each tire will have three separate grades. The treadwear grade is indicated with a two- or three-digit number. This number is a comparative rating based on the wear rate of the tire when tested in a controlled test. For example, a tire graded 150 would wear 1½ times as well on the test course as a tire graded 100. The traction and temperature resistance grades are indicated with ratings of A, B, or C—with "A" being the highest grade. The traction grades represent the tire's ability to stop on wet asphalt and concrete surfaces. The temperature resistance grades represent the tire's resistance to the generation of heat and its ability to dissipate heat.

The regulations require an explanatory label to be attached to the tread surface of bias-ply tires by April 1, 1979, bias-belted tires by October 1, 1979, and radial tires by April 1, 1980. The label will explain the grading, list the range of grades for traction and temperature resistance, and indicate all three grades of that particular tire. In addition, by October 1, 1979, for bias-ply tires, April 1, 1980, for bias-belted tires, and October 1, 1980, for radial tires, the tire grades must be molded into the tire sidewall and sellers of motor vehicles must have a statement in the owners manual concerning the tire grading regulations.

These regulations do not apply to deep tread, winter-type snow tires; to space-saver or temporary use spare tires; or to tires with nominal rim diameters of 10 to 12 inches.

The Department of Transportation has a publication explaining the new regulations and how to use them when purchasing tires. Single copies of the publication, entitled "Uniform Tire Quality Grading...Your key to a better tire buy," may be obtained free from General Services Division, Distribution, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.

HUMAN NUTRITION CENTER

The Consumer and Food Economics Institute (CFEI) became part of the Human Nutrition Center, Science and Education Administration (SEA), USDA, on December 20, 1978. The Family Economics Research Group, formerly part of CFEI, continues to be part of Agricultural Research, SEA.

The Human Nutrition Center staff directs a Federal research program on human nutrition. The program includes work on human nutritional requirements; nutrient composition of foods and the effects of agricultural practices,

handling, food processing, and cooking on the nutrients they contain; surveillance of the nutritional benefits provided to participants in the food programs administered by the Department of Agriculture; factors affecting food preference and habits; and development of techniques and equipment to assist consumers in the home or institutions in selecting food that supplies a nutritionally adequate diet.

Dr. D. Mark Hegsted, formerly Professor of Nutrition at Harvard University, is Administrator of the Human Nutrition Center.

SOME NEW USDA PUBLICATIONS

(Please give your ZIP code in your return address when you order these.)

The following are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402:

- COMPOSITION OF FOODS: BABY FOODS—RAW, PROCESSED, PREPARED. AH 8-3. Revised December 1978.
- LIVING ON A FEW ACRES. 1978 Yearbook of Agriculture. \$7.00 (hardback).

Single copies of the following are available free from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Please address your request to the office indicated:

From Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Washington, D.C. 20250:

- NUTRITION—FOOD AT WORK FOR YOU. G-S 1. Revised September 1978.
- ANTS IN THE HOME AND GARDEN—HOW TO CONTROL THEM. G 28. Revised December 1978.
- PAINTING INSIDE AND OUT. G 222 (supersedes G 155 and G 184).
- COCKROACHES—HOW TO CONTROL THEM. L 430. Revised December 1978.

From Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service, Publications Unit, Room 0054, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250:

- FARM POPULATION TRENDS AND FARM CHARACTERISTICS. RDRR 3. December 1978.

From Food and Nutrition Service, Information Division, Washington, D.C. 20250:

- FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEAL AND FREE MILK POLICY HANDBOOK. PA 1149. Revised November 1978.
- FUN WITH GOOD FOODS. PA 1204 (supersedes PA 912). October 1978.

County Extension Staff: When ordering publications, use Extension Publications Shipping Order Form ES-91A and follow instructions from your State publications distribution officer.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME, U.S. AND REGIONS

Cost of food at home estimated for food plans at 4 cost levels, March 1979, U.S. average ¹

Sex-age groups	Cost for 1 week			Cost for 1 month		
	Thrifty plan ²	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Thrifty plan ²	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan
	Liberal plan	Dollars			Dollars	
FAMILIES						
Family of 2: ³						
20-54 years	27.80	36.40	45.60	120.70	157.40	197.80
55 years and over	25.00	32.30	40.00	108.00	139.80	173.70
Family of 4:						
Couple, 20-54 years and children--						
1-2 and 3-5 years	39.20	50.70	63.30	170.00	219.30	274.30
6-8 and 9-11 years	47.20	61.10	76.70	204.30	264.40	332.40
INDIVIDUALS ⁴						
Child:						
7 months to 1 year	5.60	6.80	8.30	24.10	29.40	36.00
1-2 years	6.30	8.00	9.90	27.30	34.80	43.10
3-5 years	7.60	9.60	11.90	33.00	41.40	51.40
6-8 years	9.70	12.40	15.60	41.90	53.90	67.70
9-11 years	12.20	15.60	19.60	52.70	67.40	84.90
Male:						
12-14 years	13.00	16.50	20.80	56.20	71.70	90.00
15-19 years	14.30	18.40	23.10	62.00	79.70	99.90
20-54 years	13.90	18.30	23.10	60.40	79.10	100.00
55 years and over	12.40	16.10	20.00	53.60	69.60	86.80
Female:						
12-19 years	11.60	14.80	18.40	50.40	64.30	79.80
20-54 years	11.40	14.80	18.40	49.30	64.00	79.80
55 years and over	10.30	13.30	16.40	44.60	57.50	71.10
Pregnant	14.30	18.20	22.40	61.80	78.90	97.20
Nursing	15.20	19.30	24.10	65.70	83.80	104.30

¹Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for each plan were computed from quantities of foods published in the Winter 1976 (thrifty plan) and Winter 1975 (low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal plans) issues of Family Economics Review. The costs of the food plans were first estimated using prices paid in 1965-66 by households from USDA's Household Food Consumption Survey with food costs at 4 selected levels. USDA updates these survey prices to estimate the current costs for the food plans using information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics: "Estimated Retail Food Prices by Cities" from 1965-66 to 1977 and "CPI Detailed Report," tables 3 and 9, after 1977.

²Coupon allotment in the Food Stamp Program based on this food plan.

³10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 4.

⁴The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5-or-6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7-or-more-person--subtract 10 percent.

Cost of food at home for food plans at 3 cost levels, March 1979,
North Central region¹

Sex-age groups	Cost for 1 week			Cost for 1 month		
	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
<u>Dollars</u>						
FAMILIES						
Family of 2: ²						
20-54 years	37.40	46.20	56.00	162.10	200.20	242.70
55 years and over	33.20	40.70	49.10	144.10	176.10	212.70
Family of 4:						
Couple, 20-54 years and children--						
1-2 and 3-5 years	52.40	64.40	77.90	227.00	279.20	337.70
6-8 and 9-11 years	63.20	78.20	94.60	274.00	338.80	410.30
<u>Dollars</u>						
INDIVIDUALS ³						
Child:						
7 months to 1 year	7.10	8.50	10.10	30.70	37.00	43.80
1-2 years	8.40	10.20	12.20	36.30	44.20	52.90
3-5 years	10.00	12.20	14.80	43.30	53.00	64.20
6-8 years	13.00	16.10	19.40	56.30	69.60	84.20
9-11 years	16.20	20.10	24.30	70.30	87.20	105.50
Male:						
12-14 years	17.30	21.30	25.80	74.90	92.40	111.70
15-19 years	19.10	23.60	28.60	82.80	102.40	124.10
20-54 years	18.80	23.40	28.40	81.40	101.20	123.10
55 years and over	16.50	20.30	24.60	71.70	87.90	106.80
Female:						
12-19 years	15.50	18.90	22.80	67.00	81.90	98.60
20-54 years	15.20	18.60	22.50	66.00	80.80	97.50
55 years and over	13.70	16.70	20.00	59.30	72.20	86.60
Pregnant	18.80	22.80	27.40	81.40	98.70	118.60
Nursing	19.90	24.40	29.40	86.40	105.70	127.20

¹Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for each plan were computed from quantities of foods published in the Winter 1975 issue of Family Economics Review. The costs of the food plans were first estimated using prices paid in 1965-66 by households in the North Central Region from the USDA's Household Food Consumption Survey with food costs at 3 selected levels. These prices are updated by use of "Estimated Retail Food Prices by Cities" (Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis) released monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 3.

³The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5-or-6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7-or-more-person--subtract 10 percent.

Cost of food at home estimated for food plans at 3 cost levels, March 1979,
Northeast region¹

Sex-age groups	Cost for 1 week			Cost for 1 month		
	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
<hr/>						
	<u>Dollars</u>			<u>Dollars</u>		
FAMILIES						
Family of 2: ²						
20-54 years	38.20	49.20	59.40	165.70	213.30	257.70
55 years and over	33.80	43.00	51.80	146.30	186.30	224.70
Family of 4:						
Couple, 20-54 years and children--						
1-2 and 3-5 years	53.10	68.00	82.10	230.30	294.80	356.30
6-8 and 9-11 years	64.00	82.40	99.50	277.70	357.20	431.60
INDIVIDUALS ³						
Child:						
7 months to 1 year	6.90	8.70	10.40	29.90	37.70	44.90
1-2 years	8.40	10.60	12.70	36.30	45.90	55.20
3-5 years	10.00	12.70	15.40	43.40	55.00	66.80
6-8 years	13.00	16.70	20.20	56.50	72.50	87.60
9-11 years	16.30	21.00	25.30	70.60	90.80	109.70
Male:						
12-14 years	17.40	22.30	27.00	75.50	96.80	116.80
15-19 years	19.30	24.80	30.00	83.80	107.50	130.10
20-54 years	19.20	24.90	30.20	83.30	107.90	131.00
55 years and over	16.90	21.50	26.10	73.00	93.30	113.20
Female:						
12-19 years	15.50	19.80	23.70	67.20	85.60	102.90
20-54 years	15.50	19.80	23.80	67.30	86.00	103.30
55 years and over	13.80	17.60	21.00	60.00	76.10	91.10
Pregnant	19.10	24.10	28.90	82.60	104.30	125.10
Nursing	20.30	25.90	31.00	87.90	112.00	134.30

¹Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for each plan were computed from quantities of foods published in the Winter 1975 issue of Family Economics Review. The costs of the food plans were first estimated using prices paid in 1965-66 by households in the Northeast from the USDA's Household Food Consumption Survey with food costs at 3 selected levels. These prices are updated by use of "Estimated Retail Food Prices by Cities" (Boston; New York, Northeastern New Jersey; Philadelphia) released monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 3.

³The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5-or-6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7-or-more-person--subtract 10 percent.

Cost of food at home estimated for food plans at 3 cost levels, March 1979
Southern region¹

Sex-age groups	Cost for 1 week			Cost for 1 month		
	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
	<u>Dollars</u>			<u>Dollars</u>		
FAMILIES						
Family of 2: ²						
20-54 years	36.30	45.30	54.00	157.20	196.40	234.10
55 years and over	32.10	39.60	47.10	139.20	171.60	203.90
Family of 4:						
Couple, 20-54 years and children--						
1-2 and 3-5 years	50.50	62.80	74.80	218.70	271.90	324.00
6-8 and 9-11 years	61.00	76.10	90.80	264.10	330.00	393.20
INDIVIDUALS ³						
Child:						
7 months to 1 year	6.70	8.20	9.60	29.20	35.60	41.70
1-2 years	8.00	9.80	11.60	34.50	42.40	50.20
3-5 years	9.50	11.80	14.10	41.30	51.00	61.00
6-8 years	12.40	15.50	18.50	53.80	67.20	80.10
9-11 years	15.60	19.40	23.20	67.40	84.30	100.30
Male:						
12-14 years	16.60	20.70	24.60	71.90	89.50	106.70
15-19 years	18.50	23.00	27.50	80.00	99.50	119.00
20-54 years	18.20	22.80	27.30	78.70	99.00	118.40
55 years and over	15.90	19.70	23.60	69.10	85.50	102.20
Female:						
12-19 years	15.00	18.40	21.90	64.90	79.90	94.70
20-54 years	14.80	18.40	21.80	64.20	79.50	94.40
55 years and over	13.30	16.30	19.20	57.40	70.50	83.20
Pregnant	18.30	22.40	26.50	79.20	97.20	114.90
Nursing	19.40	24.00	28.40	84.10	104.10	123.20

¹Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for each plan were computed from quantities of foods published in the Winter 1975 issue of Family Economics Review. The costs of the food plans were first estimated using prices paid in 1965-66 by households in the South from the USDA's Household Food Consumption Survey with food costs at 3 selected levels. These prices are updated by use of "Estimated Retail Food Prices by Cities" (Atlanta; Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; Maryland; Virginia) released monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 3.

³The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5-or-6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7-or-more-person--subtract 10 percent.

Cost of food at home estimated for food plans at 3 cost levels, March 1979,
Western region¹

Sex-age groups	Cost for 1 week			Cost for 1 month		
	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
	<u>Dollars</u>			<u>Dollars</u>		
FAMILIES						
Family of 2: ²						
20-54 years	36.70	46.30	56.00	159.30	200.90	242.70
55 years and over	32.70	40.60	48.90	141.20	175.90	212.10
Family of 4:						
Couple, 20-54 years and children--						
1-2 and 3-5 years	51.20	64.10	77.70	222.10	278.00	336.90
6-8 and 9-11 years	61.90	77.80	94.40	268.20	337.30	408.80
INDIVIDUALS ³						
Child:						
7 months to 1 year	6.70	8.10	9.90	29.00	35.20	43.00
1-2 years	8.10	10.00	12.10	35.20	43.30	52.60
3-5 years	9.70	12.00	14.70	42.10	52.10	63.70
6-8 years	12.70	15.80	19.30	54.80	68.60	83.50
9-11 years	15.80	19.90	24.20	68.60	86.10	104.70
Male:						
12-14 years	16.90	21.10	25.70	73.00	91.50	111.10
15-19 years	18.70	23.40	28.50	80.90	101.40	123.50
20-54 years	18.50	23.40	28.40	80.10	101.60	123.20
55 years and over	16.30	20.30	24.60	70.40	88.00	106.60
Female:						
12-19 years	15.10	18.70	22.60	65.30	81.10	98.10
20-54 years	14.90	18.70	22.50	64.70	81.00	97.40
55 years and over	13.40	16.60	19.90	58.00	71.90	86.20
Pregnant	18.30	22.70	27.30	79.40	98.40	118.20
Nursing	19.50	24.40	29.30	84.50	105.70	126.90

¹Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for each plan were computed from quantities of foods published in the Winter 1975 issue of *Family Economics Review*. The costs of the food plans were first estimated using prices paid in 1965-66 by households in the West from the USDA's Household Food Consumption Survey with food costs at 3 selected levels. These prices are updated by use of "Estimated Retail Food Prices by Cities" (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland) released monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

²10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 3.

³The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5-or-6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7-or-more-person--subtract 10 percent.

CONSUMER PRICES

Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers
(1967 = 100)

Group	Mar. 1979	Feb. 1979	Jan. 1979	Mar. 1978
All items	209.1	207.1	204.7	189.8
Food	230.4	228.2	223.9	204.2
Food at home	229.9	228.0	223.1	202.5
Food away from home	236.0	233.4	230.2	212.3
Housing	217.6	215.6	213.1	196.7
Shelter	228.0	225.9	222.8	202.9
Rent	171.3	171.0	170.3	160.5
Homeownership	248.2	245.6	241.6	218.3
Fuel and other utilities .	225.9	223.3	221.5	212.6
Fuel oil, coal, and bottled gas	339.5	326.1	316.4	297.2
Gas (piped) and electricity	244.0	241.2	239.5	226.6
Household furnishings and operation	187.4	186.0	184.8	173.6
Apparel and upkeep	164.3	161.4	160.7	156.5
Men's and boys' apparel ..	158.7	156.7	157.4	155.8
Women's and girls' apparel	151.8	147.7	146.9	145.4
Footwear	171.6	168.9	168.7	160.7
Transportation	198.1	195.6	193.9	179.9
Private	198.1	195.5	193.8	179.1
Public	191.5	190.7	190.0	187.2
Medical care	233.9	232.6	230.7	214.5
Entertainment	184.8	183.2	182.3	174.1
Other goods and services ...	192.8	191.9	190.5	179.3
Personal care	192.1	190.4	188.9	178.2

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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